

Message Text

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ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AGR-05 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-04 INR-05

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FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8390

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ETDR, EAGR, TH

SUBJECT: SUGAR REPORT

REF: A. STATE 249577

B. AGR REPORT TH4065, OCTOBER 9, 1974

1. SUGAR CANE PRODUCTION FOR THE 1974/75 CRUSHING SEASON IS ESTIMATED AT 14.5 MILLION TONS. THIS IS APPROXIMATELY 15 PERCENT HIGHER THAN PRODUCTION IN 1973/74. RAW SUGAR PRODUCTION FOR 1974/75 IS ESTIMATED AT ONE MILLION METRIC TONS, 500,000 TONS FOR DOMESTIC CONSUMPTION AND 500,000 TONS FOR EXPORT.

2. THE HEAVY RAINS WHICH HAVE CAUSED HIGH WATER LEVELS THROUGHOUT THE CENTRAL PLAINS RESULTED IN A DELAY IN THE OPENING OF THE CRUSHING SEASON. SOUTHEAST AREA MILLS WILL BEGIN CRUSHING THE LAST WEEK IN NOVEMBER. MILLS LOCATED IN THE SOUTHWESTERN PORTION OF THE CENTRAL PLAINS WILL NOT START OPERATIONS BEFORE THE MIDDLE OF DECEMBER.

3. RTG HAS SUSPENDED SUGAR EXPORTS UNTIL THE NEW CRUSHING SEASON IS UNDERWAY. APPROXIMATELY 50,000 TONS OF RAW SUGAR REMAIN TO BE EXPORTED UNDER PRESENT CONTRACTS.

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4. DOMESTIC SUGAR PRICES HA INCREASED SHARPLY IN

RECENT WEEKS. REFINED SUGAR IS NOT AVAILABLE ON THE MARKET SHELVES, BUT CAN BE PURCHASED AT HIGHER THAN THE FIXED PRICE. THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE HAS STATED THAT THE RTG WILL SELL SUGAR, 2 KILOS PER PERSON, AT FIXED LOCATIONS THROUGHOUT BANGKOK.

5. COMMENT. SUGAR SUPPLIES ARE MORE THAN ADEQUATE FOR DOMESTIC CONSUMPTION AND EXPORT. SHARP DOMESTIC PRICE INCREASES ARE OF CONCERN TO RTG WHICH IS TRYING TO HOLD FOOD PRICES AT LEVELS THAT WILL TAKE PRESSURE OFF THE GOVERNMENT. A SIMILAR SITUATION TO EARLY 1974 WHEN RICE PRICES WERE HELD BELOW COST WILL OCCUR IF RTG DECIDES TO SELL CHEAP SUGAR ON THE DOMESTIC MARKET. LONG LINES WILL UNDOUBTEBLY FORM TO BUY SUGAR AND THERE WILL APPEAR TO BE A SUGAR SHORTAGE. IF THE RTG WERE WILLING TO ALLOW THE RETAIL PRICE OF SUGAR TO INCREASE, SUGAR WOULD REAPPEAR IN THE SHOPS.
KINTNER

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